

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4602

S E C R E T BANGKOK 24540

EXDIS

FOR HABIB FROM WHITEHOUSE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, LA, TH

SUBJECT: LAO MAP ASSETS

REF: STATE 274694

1. MANY THANKS FOR YOUR HELPFUL MESSAGE. WE DO INDEED HAVE A LOT OF BALLS IN THE AIR WITH THE THAI AT THIS MOMENT, AND I AM TRYI G TO GET AS MUCH AGREEMENT AS POSSIBLE WITHOUT SPOOKING THEM ON ISSUES WHICH CAN GIVE THEM REAL PROBLEHS, I.E. U-2S, THE LARGE RESIDUAL ELE-
MENT AT UTAPAO AND THE RETENTION HERE OF WAR RESERVE MUNITIONS.

2. ON THE RLAF PLANES, I SENSE THAT THIS WEEK'S FRACAS ON THE MEKONG GIVES AS GOOD A BACKGROUND AS WE ARE LIKELY TO GET FOR APPROACHING THE RTG AND I HAVE BEEN PLANNING TO MAKE MY PITCH TO CHATCHAI WHEN I SEE HIM TOMORROW (NOVEMBER 21). MY GUESS IS THAT THE RTG WILL CERTAINLY NOT WANT TO GIVE THE PLANES BACK AND THAT THEY WOULD MUCH RAHER HAVE THEM MELT I THE HOT SUN HERE THAN RISK FURTHER COMPLICATIONS WITH THE LAO BY LETTING THEM DISAPPEAR TO THE PHILIP-
PINES.

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3. WITH REGARD TO THE NUMBER OF PROBLEMS WITH WHICH

WE ARE COPING, WE WILL SEND YOU THE LIST I HAVE HAD
COMPILED WITH A VIEW TO KEEPING EVERYONE STRAIGHT ON
WHERE ACTION RESPONSIBILITY NOW LIES ON VARIOUS MAT-
TERS. WE WILL BE SENDING THIS TO EA SHORTLY AS IT
MAY BE HELPFUL TO YOU AND GEORGE ROBERTS.

4. I AM MINDFUL OF THE SECRETARY'S THOUGHTS WITH
REGARD TO THE BROADER CONTEXT IN WHICH OUR RESIDUAL
POWER POSITION IN THAILAND MUST BE VIEWED. AT THE
SAME TIME, I AM INCLINED TO THINK THAT THAI ACCEPTANCE
OF ACTIVITIES WHICH THEY VIEW AS DOING US A FAVOR
WILL HAVE LESS STAYABILITY THAN THOSE WHICH CLEARLY
HELP MEET THEIR OWN NATIONAL SECURITY CONCERNS AND
THAT WE SHOULD TILT THAT WAY, PARTICULARLY ON QUES-
TIONS SUCH AS CONTINUED U-2 FLIGHTS ON WHICH THERE
IS CONSIDERABLE DIFFERENCE OF OPINION WITHIN THE USG.
FOR EXAMPLE, IT IS HARDLY REASONABLE TO EXPECT THE
THAI TO BE MORE GUNG-HO THAN CINCPAC ON U-2S.

5. WHILE I WILL GO OVER THE GROUND ON RLAF AND ON
RESIDUAL OPERATIONS WITH CHATCHAI ONCE AGAIN TOMOR-
ROW, I SEE THAT THE THAI ARE NOT GOING TO GIVE US
ANY VERY CLEAR ANSWERS OR MOVE AHEAD ON ANYTHING
UNTIL AFTER CHATCHAI HAS SEEN THE SECRETARY. THEY
WANT TO GET AN IMPRESSION OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF OU

INTEREST IN THEM BEFORE GOING OUT ON ANY LIMBS.
I ALSO SUSPECT THAT IN THEIR TRADITIONAL ORIENTAL
WAY, THEY MAY APPEAR TO AGREE TO A LOT OF THINGS
WHILE THEY ARE WITH THE SECRETARY AND THEN BACK
AWAY ARTFULLY ONCE THEY GET HOME.

6. AGAIN MANY THANKS FOR YOUR MESSAGE.
WHITEHOUSE

SECRET

NNN

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